

Message Text

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60

ACTION NEA-09

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AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /074 W
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R 271104Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8988

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 1785

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS: TWO POINTS OF VIEW

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. POL COUNS SCHAFER AND VISITING KABUL POL COUNS HALLMAN MADE CALLS ON MFA OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR AFGHAN AFFAIRS AND ON AFGHAN CHARGE FEBRUARY 24. VIEWS OF BOTH PAK AND AFGHAN OFFICIALS CREATED IDEA OF KIND OF STANDOFF IN RELATIONS, WITH BOTH SIDES CLINGING TO VIEWS WHICH SEEM TO RULE OUT BETTERING OF RELATIONS AT LEAST ANY TIME SOON. END SUMMARY.

1. MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (AFGHANISTAN) MANSUR AHMED TOLD COUNSELORS SHERPAO ASSASSINATION HAD COME JUST AS PROSPECTS WERE BEGINNING TO LOOK PROMISING FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. HE EXPRESSED GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT THAT EXPLORATORY TALKS SCHEDULED BETWEEN WAHEED ABDULLAH AND AGHA SHAHI, WHICH HE WAS TO HAVE ATTENDED, HAD BEEN CANCELLED. (AHMED'S DEPUTY TOLD BRITS HERE "MAJORITY" IN MFA HAD FAVORED CARRYING ON WITH TALKS BUT HAD BEEN OVERRULED AT POLITICAL LEVEL.)

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ASKED WHETHER HE VIEWED PRESENT SITUATION AS A KIND OF

TROUGH OUT OF WHICH THINGS COULD ONLY GO UP HE DECLINED ANY OPTIMISM THAT SITUATION HAD IN FACT ALREADY HIT BOTTOM.

2. IN DISCUSSING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESENT TENSIONS, AHMED ADOPTED FAMILIARHINE THAT GOA AND NAP, "WITH WHICH IT IS COMPLETELY IDENTIFIED", WERE TO BLAME. HE STATED THAT UNLESS AFGHANISTAN "PRUNES ITS INTEREST IN ANP", GOP WOULD BE OBLIGED TO CONCLUDE THAT IT WAS INTERFERING IN PAKISTAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE PASS THIS ON IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR RESUMPTION OF ABORTED NEGOTIATIONS, AHMED WAS NOT HOPEFUL. HE SAID THAT PAKS COULD NOT AGREE TO DIALOGUE IF GOA SPECIFIED PRECONDITIONS RELATING TO NAP AND ITS JAILED LEADERS.

3. IN DISCUSSING HYPOTHETICAL OPTIONS OPEN TO GOA, AHMED DI NOT MENTION AFGHAN SUPPORT FOR A NAP GOVERNMENT IN EXILE OR FOR A QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL STATUS FOR PARTY IN CONTEXT LIBERATION STRUGGLE. HE SAID IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION THAT HE CONSIDERED SUCH A POSSIBILITY HIGHLY UNLIKELY, SINCE GOA WOULD BE AWARE OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR IT THAT SUCH SUPPORT WOULD ENTAIL. U.S. OFFICERS TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE CALL FOR RESTRAINT (TELLING AHMED U.S. MAKING SIMILAR CALL IN KABUL) AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PROJECTED DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WOULD EVENTUALLY START UP.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT CALL ON AFGHAN CHARGE RAHIM SHERZOY HE PROVED ABOUT EQUALLY GLOOMY ON PROPECTS FOR BETTER RELATIONS. HE PROFESSED BELIEF THAT BHUTTO HIMSELF HAS SHOWN CONSISTENT HOPE THAT "THINGS CAN GET BETTER" AND CITED SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER DURING WHICH BHUTTO HAD STATED THIS HOPE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH PPP POLITICIANS AND MEMBERS OF PAK BUREAUCRACY STAND IN THE WAY OF SUCH RAPPROCHEMENT. (SHERZOY ADDED AS AN ASIDE THAT MFA OFFICIALS TREATED HIM CORDIALLY ON PERSONAL BASIS, BUT THAT HE DOUBTED THEIR COMMITMENT TO GENUINE EFFORTS OF IMPROVING RELATIONS. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS DURING

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RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS AT AFGHAN EMBASSY.)

5. ASKED WHAT SPECIFIC STEP BY GOP MIGHT PERMIT A NEW EFFORT AT DIALOGUE (SUCH AS THE THREE-PHASE PLAN SKETCHED JUST BEFORE THE SHERPAO ASSASSINATION) SHERZOY REITERATED STANDARD GOA THEME THAT PAKS MUST GUARANTEE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF PEOPLE OF BALUCHISTAN AND PUSHTUNISTAN BEFORE SUCH THING COULD BEGIN. EMPHA-

SIZING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY HE DOUBTED, TOO,
THAT DIALOGUE COULD BEGIN WHILE NAP LEADERS ARE IN JAIL.
FAILING CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES AND SOME INTERNAL
HEALING OF PAK POLITICAL WOUNDS, SHERZOY STATED FEAR OF
ESCALATING VIOLENCE. "PAKISTANIS AT SME POINT HAVE GOT
TO REALIZE" HE SAID "THAT THENAP IS A PAKISTANI PARTY,
AND THAT FOREVER BRANDING IT AS A FOREIGN PARTY IS GOING
TO LEAVE THE NAP NO PLACE TO GO."

6. THOUGH NEW GOP OR GOA DECISIONS OR POLICIES COULD, OF COURSE,
GIVE IMPETUS AT ANY TIME TO RENEWED EFFORTS
AT IMPROVING PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS, INTERESTING (AS WELL
AS DISMAYING) TO OBSERVE SCANT PROSPECTS SEEN FROM
ISLAMABAD BY THESE TWO MID-LEVEL DIPLOMATS.
BYROADE

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